Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—We cannot do that. The shop-keeper must have sufficient supply. He has to pay rent to the Government.

President.—Suppose he increases the value of the article?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Then nobody would go to him. For example, in a place there may be half a dozen shops. If one man raises the price of the article, he will not get customers.

Mr. M. K. Raman.—Cannot the Government fix a rate for all places, and issue an order that arrack should be sold at such and such a rate in such and such places and not above or below it.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Our policy is based on the Madras policy. It is not done there.

President.—There is also this thing to be taken into account. We cannot chalk out a policy of our own. We have always to see how the system is working in the neighbouring countries.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—We are not following either the Madras policy or the Travancore policy. But it is only a camouflage to say that we are following the policy of Madras and Travancore. As a matter of fact, we are not following that policy. I wish to point out an instance. When we compare th consumption in the two States, Cochin consumes more, and the consumption of toddy is three times more than what it is in Travancore.

President.—We have not compared the figures.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—So we have not been following the policy of Prohibition. There should have been a decrease in the number of trees tapped; and the consumption of arrack, we do not find, has in any way decreased.

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—There is decrease in the quantity of arrack consumed.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—What is the meaning of saying that there is decrease?

The Excise Advisory Committee.

111. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to inform whether one of the objects with which the Excise Advisory Committee has been appointed is to suggest ways and means for controlling liquor traffic and to bring about Prohibition within a practically small time in the State?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—The object with which the Excise Committee has been appointed is given in the Diwan's

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Proceedings, dated 8th March 1926, R. O. C. No. 35/01, Revenue Department (Separate Revenue).

112. Mr. K. T. Mathew.— Will the Government be pleased to state —

(a) the date on which the Excise Committee was formed;

(b) whether the Government has not requested the Superintendent of Excise Revenue 'to take the necessary action so that the Committee may begin their work and submit their Report as early as possible', and if so, when did the Committee meet first, and if the Committee had its first sitting a month and half after its formation, what has been this delay due to;

(c) whether the Government will ascertain from the Committee that an interim report could not be submitted by the Committee for being made use of by the Government and the Legislative Council Members, while discussing the Excise budget for 1102;

(d) whether the fee license system for tapping for sweet toddy will be continued during 1102, in spite of the vehement protests made by some of the non-official Members of the Legislative Council against the continuation of the present system, and whether the system in vogue in Madras Presidency will be followed; and if the answer be that the Government should know the opinion of the Excise Committee in the matter,

(e) whether the Committee will be asked that their opinion in the matter could not be expressed, (if necessary, the matter being discussed at a special meeting) before the ensuing budget session of the Legislative Council, and if the answer is in the negative, that the opinion of the Committee would not be asked, whether the reasons for it will be stated?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—(a) 8th March 1926.

(b) Yes. The Committee first met on 14th Edavam 1101. The delay was due to the absence of the President from the State on unavoidable urgent private business.

(c) The Government do not consider it expedient to do so.

(d) The present system will be continued.

(e) Vide answer to (c) above. The Member may move the Committee.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—May I know whether the Excise Committee cannot have its meeting, if the President is absent for a long time?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—Being the first meeting, I thought it desirable to have the President also, since we had to chalk out the lines on which we have to proceed.

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Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Is it laid down that the presence of the President is absolutely necessary for all meetings?

President.—No.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—We have only a preliminary meeting. We could have done it earlier, especially when it is mentioned that the Committee should submit its report as early as possible. I think that there is no sufficient reason for this delay

Mr. T. K. Krishna Menon.—I think no discussion can be permitted on this point.

President.—Of course, the Excise Superintendent said that he wished that the President should be present at the first meeting. But the Proceedings does not show that. So the matter ends.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—For the ensuing meeting, is it necessary that the President should be present?

President.—May not be necessary; but it is desirable to have the President.

Mr. K. T. Mathew.—I desire to point out that the Committee is not doing the work which is entrusted to it.

President.—It is a matter of inference.

The unrestricted sale of liquor in the State.

113. Mr. K. T. Mathew.—Will the Government be pleased to state the reason for not allowing the common or unrestricted sale of liquor in the State and the steps taken by the Government for restricting the sale of liquor in the State, and whether, as a result of such steps, the consumption of liquor in the State has increased in the last decade, and if so, what is the increase?

Mr. V. B. Vaidyanatha Ayyar.—If, by common or unrestricted sale, the farming system is meant, the system was not continued, because the Government wanted to minimise the drinking habit and to bring it under control. The steps taken for restricting the sale of liquor are:—

(1) the introduction of the independent shop system;

(2) the establishment of a Central Distillery at Trichur;

(3) the restriction in the number and location of shops;

(4) the imposition of duty on liquor and of tax on tapping trees and the gradual enhancement thereof;

(5) restrictions as to the hours of sale and persons to whom liquor can be sold;

(6) the reduction in the strength of liquor and other restrictions to prevent fraud.

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